

R 180944Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2260
INFO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 000268

NOFORN

E.O. 12958 DECL:03/17/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: UAE ASKED AGAIN TO CONSIDER HOSTING GUANTANAMO DETAINEES

REFS: A) STATE 23824, B) ABU DHABI 75, C) ABU DHABI 12

Classified by Ambassador Richard Olson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: Delivering the Secretary's letter (ref A) requesting that the UAEG consider accepting third-country detainees from Guantanamo, Ambassador-at-large Williamson stressed the U.S. Administration's sense of urgency in closing the facility. MinState Gargash sought context in terms of detainee numbers and processes, promising to raise the issue with senior UAEG leaders. He noted both legal issues and enhanced scrutiny of UAEG treatment of the detainees as complicating factors. End summary.

¶2. (S/NF) Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes Issues Clint Williamson delivered the Secretary's letter (ref A) to UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr. Anwar Gargash on March 17, stressing that the new U.S. Administration was reaching out to friends and allies for support in closing Guantanamo. Acknowledging the complexities of the issue of receiving detainees, Williamson emphasized that the USG could not succeed without the help of our partners in the fight against extremism.

¶3. (S/NF) Dr. Gargash, who had received an S/WCI delegation in January (refs B and C), sought clarification on numbers of detainees to ensure he understood the context of our dilemma. He asked how many still in detention had clear ties to al-Qaeda and the Taliban -- or at least "substantial evidence against them" -- or were particularly dangerous. Reviewing the numbers, Williamson noted that we seek assistance in hosting some of the less dangerous cases who are unable to return to their home countries. These are a small minority of the overall Guantanamo population, he noted, with Yemen presenting some particularly tricky issues.

¶4. (S/NF) Satisfied that he had sufficient context to appeal again to senior UAEG leaders (through Foreign Minister Abdullah, to whom the Secretary's letter is addressed), Dr. Gargash undertook to relay our request forthrightly on what he called "a very thorny subject, to be honest." He noted that beyond the legal issues involved, any country accepting released detainees would come under added scrutiny by international NGOs; "this is one of the complications." He also noted that the UAE does not have a robust rehabilitation program like Saudi Arabia because it does not face a similar problem (noting the Kingdom's "several years" of "pitched battles" with extremists). Nonetheless, the UAE "will definitely look into" the USG request and reply accordingly.

¶5. (S/NF) Williamson said that if the UAEG would be prepared to explore the issue further, the USG could provide detailed information on specific individuals and facilitate interviews with detainees if that might be helpful. Dr. Gargash sought clarification on whether other Arab countries has taken third-country national detainees (not yet), and thanked Ambassador Williamson for taking on this "tough job."

OLSON